

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

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DEAR MEMBER,

We have already noted how the conflict between the Vichy Government and Christian and liberal sentiment in France has come to be centred on the issue of the persecution of the Jews.

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

The following comment on the situation by a distinguished Jew, Dr. Walter Zander, in "Notes on the Way" in *Time and Tide*, deserves quotation:—

"French Christianity has stood a severe test when she had the strength to fight not only for herself, but also for the Jews. How easy it would have been to have kept silent. After all, the hunted were not even French. They belonged to the most helpless group of all; they were Jewish aliens. But France, beaten and humiliated, stood up—*et resurrexit*—and without heeding her own danger, took sides with the despised, proclaiming fearlessly that all men are brothers created by the same God; and when in face of the persecution the Archbishop of Toulouse broke out with the cry: 'France, France, bien-aimée France, ce n'est pas toi...' a strength was revealed which may be powerful enough to make the French cathedrals a rallying point for all the spiritual forces of the tortured continent."

Since so much hinges on the Jewish question in the social conflicts and war of ideas to-day, we must heartily welcome the formation in this country of a Council of Christians and Jews, under the presidency of the heads of the Christian Churches and the Chief Rabbi. Its objects are to combat religious and racial intolerance, to promote mutual understanding and good-will between Christians and Jews, and to foster co-operation between them in study and service directed to post-war reconstruction. The headquarters of the Council are at 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C. 1.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF BROADCASTING TO CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION

A landmark in co-operation between the Churches was the delivery in the summer of this year of six broadcast talks by Dr. William Paton, at the request and with the approval of the leaders of the Churches in this country, on "The Church and World Order," now published under the title *The Church Calling*.¹ A synopsis of the talks was submitted in advance to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the President of the Methodist Conference and the secretaries of the Congregational Union and the Baptist Union, all of whom expressed agreement with the main substance, so that what was said represented, broadly speaking, not simply the personal views of the speaker, but the common Christian mind of this country. It is also noteworthy that the B.B.C., which is necessarily subject to the war censorship, should have welcomed the expression of a Christian view of the international situation.

Another significant development in religious broadcasting is the initiation last Sunday of a "Christian News-Bulletin" to be given weekly on Sunday from 4.45 to 5 p.m. No one can measure the influence on the growth of a common Christian mind of a weekly opportunity for Christians to look over their ecclesiastical hedges and build up a picture of what the entire Christian body is doing, or attempting to do, or is suffering, throughout the war.

¹ Edinburgh House Press, 2 Eaton Gate, London, S.W. 1. 1s.

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Under the auspices of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches seven leading Churchmen of American, French, Swiss, German, Dutch and Swedish nationality met recently on the continent. They have sent, under their autograph signatures, the following greeting to the Churches associated in the ecumenical fellowship :—

“ Our thoughts and prayers go in the first place to those Churches which are going ‘ through a fiery trial.’ We hear them say to us what St. Paul wrote from his prison to the Philippians : ‘ Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through our bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.’

“ This blessing is, however, not only given to the Churches under the Cross, but comes through them to the whole fellowship of believers in Christ. For the good confession of the struggling Churches is a call to all Churches to renewal of faith and life. They show us what it means to be the Church of Christ as they stake their all on the Word of God, as they rebuild their parish life on the Biblical pattern of fellowship and solidarity, and as they seek to fulfil the prophetic mission of the Church to the nations by their protest and warnings against anti-Christian ideologies and practices. So we say to the suffering Churches what St. Paul said to the Thessalonians : ‘ You have received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost, so that you became an example to all that believe.’

“ As we have heard reports from many Churches we have been impressed by the evidence which shows that precisely because of this new encounter with the reality of the Cross the fellowship between the Churches becomes deeper. That is why we have felt free to begin to prepare for the days when the Church may again in full freedom clearly manifest her ecumenical character.”

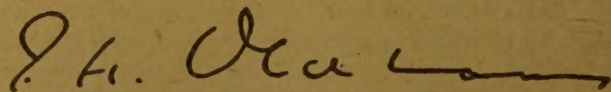
THE PERSON IN COMMUNITY

An important addendum to last week's Letter has reached me from a member to whose ripe wisdom the News-Letter has been in debt since it began :—

“ My own quarrel with the report, which on the whole I much admire, is that it says nothing about vocational education. Most general thinkers on the problem seem to me to be giving this up as a lost cause. I begin to despair and to feel old and out-of-date ; because to me it seems sun-clear and certain that if this cause *is* lost, and we have no idea but to educate people as ‘ citizens ’ up to an ever-increasing age, then *all* is lost. What you say about the ‘ crucial middle term,’ the lack of any catering for the intermediate groups and sodalities, is indeed all too true ; but apart from the family and the devotional group, the most essential of all these natural loyalties are the vocational ones, to the people of whom one learns a craft or ‘ mystery ’ and with whom one will have to practise it. If that relation is not cultivated for peace and production, it will be fostered for robbery and destruction, sure as eggs is eggs. In the economic life of a society, the less there is of the *personal*, e.g. apprenticeship-journeyman-master-relationships, the more it will resemble that of a brigand conspiracy, both in its internal order and its behaviour among other nations.”

The writer of this week's Supplement, better known to some as Moira Neill, is the wife of Mr. W. G. Symons, who has contributed two Supplements (Nos. 92 and 124).

Yours sincerely,



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